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SUBJECT: Vietnam/TIP: DEMARCHE DELIVERED, RECEIVED WELL

REF: STATE 85571

¶1. (SBU) Poloff delivered reftel demarche and an advance copy of the Vietnam language in the TIP report to Americas Desk Section Chief Le Chi Dzung June 5. Dzung was well briefed on the main TIP issues of concern regarding Vietnam in the report. He said that Vietnam appreciates the overall balance shown in the report, and provided several specific responses.

¶2. (SBU) To begin with, Dzung said the United States should recognize that "no one cares more about the welfare of Vietnamese citizens and protecting them from abuse than we do." Vietnam is very serious about combating trafficking, and has dedicated substantial resources to the task. However, he said, the GVN recognizes that combating trafficking is a daunting task for a developing country in a rapidly globalizing economy where differentials in standards of living and wage scales are significant and readily apparent to the population. "There is a lot of migration pressure in Vietnam," Dzung said, "and that means a lot of opportunity for exploitation."

¶3. (SBU) Dzung addressed some of the points raised in the Vietnam portion of the TIP report. He agreed that exploitation of Vietnamese brides and trafficking through marriage is a problem in Vietnam, but disagreed with the U.S. conclusion that the GVN has not made efforts to combat the problem. Fraudulent marriage is one of the main trafficking methods used to send women to China, and is the focus of anti-TIP enforcement efforts, he said. Regarding forced labor conditions, Dzung objected to the report's use of the phrase "forced labor conditions of many Vietnamese workers sent abroad." Cases involving forced labor are very rare, Dzung said, and usually involve Vietnamese who have left their legal contracts voluntarily. The report makes it sound as though this is a regular occurrence or something that happens on a large scale; in fact, there have been only a few cases out of hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese laborers abroad. He challenged the Embassy to provide data to back up the report's allegations of "many" workers facing forced labor conditions.

¶4. (SBU) Dzung agreed that the expansion of labor export requires additional resources for the oversight of labor export companies and the protection of Vietnamese workers abroad, and noted that a new labor export law is "under construction" now with input from international experts, including the ILO and IOM, and should be ready for passage in November 2006. Finally, he questioned the report's assertion that "some local government officials reportedly profited from trafficking" and asked for the evidence the USG has to support this "extremely serious" allegation.

MARINE